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FRIENDSHIP

BETWEEN

THE UNITED STATES

AND

JAPAN

*Superficial Causes of Misunderstanding
Not Likely to Overbalance Sound Reasons
for Maintaining Historic Amity*

by

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THE consortium lately negotiated by Thomas W. Lamont, in which Japan has joined, will not only bring relief and support to China, but also relieve Japan of the conditions under which she has forced China to pay exorbitant rates for loans, and has insisted on securities which further crippled China.

It is likely to take a long time to change the views about the Japanese now held by large numbers of Americans. For example, the exclusion policy of the labor unions is likely to be maintained by both the great political parties in the United States, until the majority of the American people decide that they do not purpose to be controlled by any kind of labor monopoly, any more than by any kind of capitalistic monopoly, especially in regard to such necessities as foods, fuels, shelters and transportation.

What will be the attitude of the Japanese Government and people toward the United States during this long period? It will be just what it has been—an attitude of disappointment and discontent, but nevertheless an attitude of patience, forbearance and persistent good-will. No Japanese Government, no matter what political party or group it represented, has ever done anything, either before or since the war with Russia, which could bring about, or had any tendency to bring about, war with the United States.

Every Japanese Government has known, and will know, that the United States is Japan's best customer in respect to both exports and imports, and its best defense, after Great Britain, against either industrial or financial oppression from Occidental nations. After Great Britain, the United States has been and is Japan's best ally. In respect to knowledge of the sciences and of their technical application, the United States has been the best instructor Japan has had, and it is altogether probable that that relation will be continued; be-

cause American corporations have seen their way to combine with Japanese corporations in using American patents and skill on Japanese soil with Japanese labor, the control of the combined enterprises resting in Japanese hands. Such industrial combinations imply a strong confidence on both sides in each other's intelligence and rectitude.

Along the Same Path

In respect to natural resources, extent of population and self-sufficiency within her own border, Japan can never expect to approach the United States; but in some respects the two nations are likely to follow the same path and reap similar benefits. Thus both nations are likely to increase production of both necessities and luxuries, to multiply and improve their methods of transportation and communication, and thus to bring about among all classes of the people an increasing comfort, better health and fuller exemption from the evil effects of disease and vice. To these ends both peoples are using skillfully their growing knowledge of the sciences and arts which promise to multiply production, control pestilences, droughts, floods and famines, and prevent the ravages of diseases consequent upon animal passions and vicious practices. It may be hoped, too, that both nations will improve their habitual diets, the Japanese toward greater variety and nutritive strength, the Americans toward greater simplicity and moderation. Both nations now agree, and are likely to continue to agree, in detesting the genuine socialistic theories and practices.

The competition between America, Great Britain and Japan for the carrying trade of the world, and particularly of the Pacific, is sure to become active and highly beneficial to all parties, provided that means are found of keeping up an American commercial marine. It is obvious that an American commercial marine cannot compete on equal money terms with either the British or the Japanese, because both these countries employ Oriental crews, which are not only much cheaper than Occidental crews, but also more faithful and effective. At present no one seems to see how an adequate number of Americans can be kept in the commercial marine service as sailors or stokers. Possibly, in the near future, American vessels, owned and officered by Americans, may be allowed to employ Oriental crews, or some

method of national subsidy may be invented which will seem expedient to American industrial managers, investors and taxpayers, and to the mass of consumers.

Both countries have a common interest in the destruction of militarism, the reduction of armaments and the maintenance of international peace, but the interest of Japan in these reforms is really much keener than that of the United States, because Japan, as all its statesmen know, is relatively a poor country, and a country already overburdened with public debts and high taxation. Both countries, however, entertain like hopes for the abolition of poverty, the reduction of the too common anxieties about health, non-employment and old age, and the increase of liberty, comfort and happiness for all mankind.

From Personal Observation

In 1912 I spent about four months in the eastern part of China from Canton to Peking, and in Southern Japan, studying educational and political conditions in both countries. I enjoyed special opportunities for intercourse with eminent men, because I traveled as an envoy of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and was welcomed in all the cities I visited by Chinese or Japanese graduates of Harvard University, most of whom were occupying important places under the government, or in the management of financial institutions or large industrial establishments.

In both countries I had conversation with the actual rulers of the country, and with men influential in the various political parties. I also met, in both countries, men who were in the management of important manufacturing industries, but had never visited the Occident. In both countries I examined characteristic industrial establishments, always under friendly and competent guidance. In both countries I met a considerable number of important personages who spoke English, but also was sometimes obliged to rely in important interviews on the service of interpreters; as, for instance, in my interviews with the then Dictator of China and with the then Emperor of Japan. In Japan I was attended every day by some member of the committee of the Harvard Club of Tokio, who most of the time followed a program made out for me beforehand by the committee, a program which indicated day by day the institutions or per-

sonages that I was to visit; but I also selected for myself various institutions and industrial establishments which I wished to see. To a less degree I was guided, in China, by very friendly committees or persons to institutions or personages that they thought it best for me to see; but there, too, I saw things and people that I selected myself.

One important excursion in China I lost, because of the very recent fighting at Hankow and the precarious conditions of travel on the Yang-tse-Kiang and on the railroad from Hankow to Peking; but, on the whole, the ordinary life of the people was going on without any unusual disturbance in all the cities and towns I visited, both in China and in Japan. I was watchful at all times against the not improbable effort of my friendly guides to let me see only the most favorable sides of Chinese or Japanese life, or those sides most likely to commend themselves to an Occidental observer.

China and Japan

The relations between the two Governments and peoples were even then tense; although less so than they are now. The Japanese were active in seeking to extend their influence in South Manchuria, and particularly to control the means of transportation there. It was just after the annexation of Korea by Japan; and the first eminent Japanese official that I talked with was General Terauchi, the Governor General of Korea (later Prime Minister of Japan), then living at Seoul, whose life had lately been threatened by a Korean secret organization with which American missionaries were supposed to be in sympathy.

Throughout my journey I carried with me a good selection of recent books on China and Japan, all of which I had read earlier, in order that I might profit by the observations and opinions which their authors had recorded, and might compare them with my own on the spot.

I wish now to state my impressions of the Japanese people and their Government, as formed under the conditions above described. These impressions have remained essentially the same during the past eight years, although these years have witnessed great changes in the industrial and social conditions of the leading Occidental nations and also of Japan.

The Japanese nation seemed to me, and still seems to me, one of the most industrious, patient, self-reliant and efficient

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nations in the world; whose whole history illustrates these moral qualities, and one other, the virtue of loyalty to rulers, social chiefs and country. This people has accomplished, since Commodore Perry's visit to Japan in 1853, an extraordinary transformation in the industrial, commercial and educational policies and practices of the country.

They have put into force a system of universal instruction, copied with some modifications from the German system. They have introduced the chief manufacturing industries of Europe and America, and have practiced them with great skill and success. They have put themselves on a level with the Occidental nations in the manufacture and use of all the best appliances of modern industries, such as mining and metallurgical appliances, telegraphs, telephones and all other electrical instruments, the tools of photography, and all the machinery and tools of the textile industries. Within the same short period they have set up all the best forms of financial institutions, such as banks, savings banks and private co-operative institutions. They have established great steamship lines all over the world, and have conducted them with remarkable enterprise and skill and without foreign aid, except at the early stages of the business. Within their own country, in Korea, and in various parts of China, they have built and organized great armies built on universal training and service, and a navy which easily overcame the Russian navy, but has never been matched against any of the strong Occidental navies.

Extraordinary Progress

These great changes in Japanese life have been accomplished gradually though rapidly without any grave disturbances, such as Occidental nationals have undergone under the name of revolution. The world has had no experience elsewhere of such prodigious changes for the better in the manners, customs and industrial and commercial standing of a whole people. It is a demonstration of intelligence, virtue and working-power in an entire nation led by men of extraordinary insight and sagacity.

The process by which the Japanese statesmen imported into Japan most of the sciences and arts of the Occident within a single generation, argued a high degree not only of intelligence, but of openmindedness. They imported from

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America, Great Britain, France and Germany teachers capable of imparting to young Japanese who had learned English, not only the sciences of chemistry, physics and biology, but of the arts on which the successful development of modern industries depend. They brought over from all those countries not only learned professors for service in universities and technical schools, but also artisans who were accustomed to the use of modern machinery and tools; and they pursued this method until native Japanese had been trained to carry on that work. They also sent to all the countries mentioned Japanese young men of promise who were to study in the Occidental universities and in the industrial establishments of those nations, and then apply their acquisitions in Japan.

The first Japanese student to take a degree at Harvard University was Tanetaro Megata, who obtained the degree of Bachelor of Laws in the Harvard Law School in 1874. He later served as chief assistant to Count Matsukata, who carried Japan from a silver to a gold currency in a year and a half; instead of thirteen years (1865-1878) from greenbacks to gold in the United States, and he has ever since been an important personage in Japanese administration. Four years later Jutaro Komura, later Marquis Komura, and Kentaro Kaneko, later Viscount Kaneko, took their degrees at the Harvard Law School. Mr. Komura went into the diplomatic service and became Ambassador to Korea and then to America. He was one of the negotiators of peace with Russia at Portsmouth, after which he was made Ambassador to Great Britain. His son is now Secretary of Foreign Affairs at Tokio. Mr. Kaneko was subsequently secretary of the commission which studied in America, Great Britain, France and Germany the changes which were later introduced into the political structure of the Japanese Empire.

These changes were naturally adopted from the Constitution of Imperial Germany, because the German Emperor was the strongest representative in the Occident of divine right government, coupled with close attention to the military, educational and industrial development of the whole people. Of course, the origin and history of the Japanese imperial house are very different from those of the Hohenzollern house. The Japanese conceptions about their reign-

ing family are highly humane; and Prussianism has no hold on the Japanese people.

Calling in Foreign Professors

The way in which the Japanese Government procured professors from foreign countries to serve in Japan was highly interesting. The Government requested Presidents of universities or high educational officials in the Occident to select, on their own responsibility, competent men who were willing to work in Japan for a period named, such as three, five or seven years, on pecuniary conditions which would satisfy desirable men. Contracts were then made by the Japanese Minister at Washington, or other foreign capital, with the persons so selected, the salaries being good from the American standpoint and enormous from the Japanese point of view. The Japanese Government often tried to retain these foreign appointees for a second term and were sometimes successful in their efforts. The Government pursued this method for many years, indeed until they were able to secure competent teachers of Japanese birth; but most of these Japanese had studied for some years in an Occidental country.

The Government pursued a similar policy with regard to the importation of Occidental machinery. They would buy machinery of many sorts in America, for example, sending competent Japanese to study the machinery they bought while it was in process of manufacture, and also the shops, mines or factories in which such machinery was used. At first all machinery purchased was set up in Japan by foreign workmen; but by degrees the Japanese learned to do without such assistance. The same was true of their shipbuilding and of the management of their steamships in foreign trade. They have long since become independent in all such matters.

As to their school system, they set on foot in 1872 a comprehensive national system, modeled on the German, which has been steadily maintained and enriched ever since. When I was in Japan in 1912, I noticed that at many points the instruction and training given to Japanese children and adolescents were decidedly superior to those given to American children of like ages, especially in domestic arts, the observation of nature out of doors, civic duty and patriotism. In their introduction of medical and engineering science and

skill the Japanese Government and people have also surprised the Occidental world.

New Political Structure

While these educational, industrial and commercial changes have been in rapid progress a great political and social transformation has been going on. The ancient feudal-paternal structure of Japanese society has gradually been decaying, and the political structure of the empire has been slowly admitting features of Occidental constitutional liberty and party government. The suffrage introduced is a limited one, and the powers of the Assembly do not compare with those exercised by the Assembly of any one of the free Occidental nations. The real government of Japan is still exercised by one or other of two groups of experienced statesmen and military and naval commanders. One of these groups thinks of itself as liberal, the other as conservative, militaristic or bureaucratic.

As a matter of fact, these two groups have been alternately in power for periods generally short during the last twenty years, but the liberal group have had control of the Government fewer years than the conservative group. The way in which either group comes into power or goes out is not open to public observation, and is not easily apprehended by the Occidental mind. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the Japanese people as a whole has, during the past sixty years, made great gains toward social and political liberty, and is pressing forward in that direction, the great war having distinctly expedited the advance. The educated young people in Japan entertain liberal opinions in respect to the social as well as the political organization more and more. They resemble in this respect the young people in Great Britain at this moment. The head of the present Cabinet is not only a party politician, but a representative of the industrial and commercial interests of Japan.

It is no wonder that these achievements of the nation, since Commodore Perry's advent in 1853, have aroused a new ambition in the Japanese people and their Government. They now see themselves as the only Oriental nation equipped with Occidental military, naval, industrial and commercial powers. Their industrial and commercial triumphs, and their wars with China and Russia have convinced them

that they are the chief Oriental power on the Pacific and Indian oceans, and in Eastern Asia on land. In Asia, they see no rival, either now or in the near future. Moreover, they find themselves in regard to the Orient in very much the same position which Great Britain occupies in the Occident. Neither nation can raise its own food or get its needed raw materials at home. They both must be prepared to protect their communications by sea. Japan is also dependent on other countries for necessities like coal, iron and cotton, and the more her manufacturing capacity increases the more dependent she is on other countries for sea-borne raw materials. Just like Great Britain, she needs to send out some of her trained young men all over the world to maintain her foreign trade, both exports and imports; and just like Great Britain, she needs an outlet in foreign countries for her superfluous population, both agricultural and industrial.

Foreign Policies Compared

There is an interesting analogy between the foreign policy of Great Britain since the opening of the nineteenth century and the foreign policy of Japan since it became a world power in the last quarter of the same century. England's policy has been habitually a defensive policy. Her part in the Napoleonic wars was a defensive war. She fought the Crimean war as a defense against formidable Russia. When Germany built a powerful navy, Great Britain over-matched her in building, for motives of defense, and her part in the great war was resolutely played to defend herself and the rest of the world against a very terrible and unexpected attack. In a similar way, Japan, since she has had any international existence, has been obliged to consider how she is to defend herself from the great powers with which she is in contact and competition. Having abandoned, or at any rate lost, her former position of isolation, she has had to ask herself how she is to defend her rights and her territory against the Occidental nations and against China—that huge mass now helpless, but capable of developing with time and teaching a tremendous military and industrial power. Toward China and Russia, Japan has, from time to time, seemed aggressive; but even at those moments she has been really providing defense either by depriving possible adversaries

of ready access to her own soil, or of possessions from which a powerful enemy could dominate Japan proper.

The increasing contact of the Japanese with foreign nations on Occidental soil has brought upon the Japanese, a proud and self-satisfied nation, a curious mortification and distress. They have regarded themselves as a highly civilized people, possessing a creditable history and manual arts of unexampled excellence. They have thought themselves more civilized and humane than any of the Christian nations. They find themselves regarded by several of the Christian nations as a people only semi-civilized, and as undesirable residents within the territories of those nations. To the leading Japanese minds and to the humblest Japanese emigrants alike this is an unexpected humiliation. They bear it with remarkable patience, but still resent it. They seek always a position of equality as regards rights and privileges on foreign soil. They desire a complete recognition of their high qualities and attainments as a nation.

Japan as a Colonizer

On the other hand, it is obvious that the Japanese are not good colonizers in climates warmer than their own, any more than the French are. A French colonist in Algeria, Morocco, Tunis or Egypt always means to go back to France as soon as he had made money enough to support his family there; and the Japanese feel very much in the same way if they emigrate to a country hotter than their own. The Japanese Government today does not consider that it has succeeded in colonizing Formosa with Japanese, although great sums of money have been expended on that undertaking. Every Japanese official with whom I talked in 1912 about the foreign relations of Japan protested warmly that Japan had no use for the Philippine Islands, or for any islands in the tropics. They were unanimously eager that the United States should retain possession of the Philippines; but their motive seemed to be that if the United States abandoned the Philippines, Germany would seize them, a result which they dreaded very much.

What the Japanese really desire and aim at in their foreign relations, is "peaceful penetration" with rights and privileges equal to those of any other nation, and just such freedom on the ocean as the British Empire enjoys, sup-

ported in the same way, though not by so large a navy. The Japanese also desire an extension of their national territory on the mainland of China, in about their own latitude. They desire this extension of their territory for two reasons: First, that they may get more room for their expanding population, and secondly, that they may be able to raise more food within the territory they may call their own. One cannot blame them, therefore, for their natural desire to acquire Southern Manchuria, with its temperate climate and its fertile soil. Japan regards that acquisition as fair pay for its expenditures in the war with China and for the loss of Port Arthur to Russia at the end of that war, under a compulsion exercised by Germany, France and Russia.

Americans cannot but respect and approve the successful resistance of Japan to the pressure of Great Britain, France, Germany and Russia, for commercial or financial privileges and for territory in important ports, a kind of pressure which those powers had long been in the habit of exerting upon China. Those aggressive powers got few concessions from Japan, even while she was very weak, such as they were in the habit of forcing from helpless China. It is one great source of satisfaction for Americans that their Government never sought for any concessions from feeble China or participated in any way in concessions forced from her by the European powers. To be sure, after the suppression of the Boxer insurrection by outside military forces, to which the United States contributed, the American Government accepted from China an indemnity for losses and damages suffered by its nationals during the fighting, just as the other foreign nations did; but when this indemnity turned out to be in excess of those losses and damages the United States returned the balance to China.

Americans who have never been in Japan or met educated and refined Japanese men and women, or had opportunity to appreciate Japanese civilization, seem to entertain, easily, opinions adverse to that nation. At any rate, such opinions prevail widely among Americans, and especially in the army and navy, or rather in those detachments that have served in the East. While I was in China and Japan in 1912 I talked with a considerable number of American officers of both the army and the navy, who were serving in or near China and Japan, about the probability of war with Japan.

With a single exception, they expected a war between the United States and Japan within a few months; and most of them thought it was high time. Fortunately the single exception had, for the moment, command of the American naval forces in those waters.

When I asked these gentlemen why the United States should go to war with Japan, their answers always took one form, though with varying degrees of emphasis. "The Japanese are too 'cocky'; they mean to rule the Pacific and the Oriental seas, just as Great Britain rules the Atlantic and the sea routes to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India. They mean to contest the sea power of the United States on the Pacific, to win free access for Japanese emigrants to the United States, and to plant Japanese colonies in Mexico, Central America and South America. The sooner we fight them the better."

Causes of Wrong Opinion

The main source of these opinions among American army and navy men is to be found in Admiral Mahan's forcible book on "Sea Power." He there taught that Japan would inevitably demand the control of the Pacific—a control which it was not for the interest of America to concede. In addition to this prophesied cause of war between Japan and the United States, several other motives have urged many Americans to resist the natural ambition of the only Oriental nation which is equipped with European means of warfare, and has made great achievements in industrial production and in commerce. The American and Canadian labor unions have objected strongly to the introduction into the United States and Canada of Japanese immigrants, because of their skill, industry and lower wages. The American communities on the Pacific Coast have distrusted the admission of Oriental laborers, who differ widely from the American stock in racial characteristics and religion, and in habits and customs; although they found it very advantageous to employ them in domestic service and in local seasonal industries which require long hours, deftness and watchful care. Some of the religious denominations have regarded with disfavor the importation of numerous non-Christian aliens, who are as a rule rather insusceptible to conversion. American and English firms or agents doing business in Chinese ports or

cities are apt to dislike the competition of Japanese firms or agents doing similar business in the same places, because the Japanese are often more assiduous and enduring than they are.

In short, the Japanese are formidable competitors for Chinese business. Hence a critical attitude toward all things Japanese, and a constant effort to embroil the Chinese and the Japanese peoples. The activity and ingenuity of the Japanese traveling salesman and peddler in China increase this racial friction. Moreover, American tourists in Japan and China have often brought away from Japan an impression that the Japanese are less trustworthy in business relations than the Chinese. They observe that in the foreign banking houses to which they resort for money and guidance, Chinese cashiers are often employed; and they accept the statement current among foreigners that the Japanese themselves employ Chinese in preference to their own countrymen in positions of trust. The facts in the case are that the foreign bankers in Japan have generally come over from China or from India, bringing with them the habit of employing Chinese cashiers or compradores, and that the Japanese themselves never employ Chinese in their financial institutions or in other fiduciary positions.

In Yokohama, just before I sailed for home, I met at luncheon ten principal agents in Japan of American and European companies which carry on active trade with the Japanese in Japan and have done so for many years. The group included the agents of the Standard Oil Company and of the Singer Sewing Machine Company. The testimony of this group was unanimous that it was just as comfortable and safe to deal with the Japanese as with the people of the several Occidental nations represented at the table; that, indeed, a Japanese who had made a bargain which turned out to be bad would ask some relief from the other party, just as an American or Englishman would do under like circumstances, but when relief was refused would keep his word just as well as the American or the Englishman. One of the agents present at this meeting was not so positive or sure as the rest, but he did not really dissent from the general opinion.

The inevitable conclusion from all these premises is that the United States and Japan should always be good friends and neighbors, and cordial allies.

